

UNWILLINGNESS TO COME TO CHRIST

NO. 1324

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And you will not come to Me, that you might have life.”
John 5:40.

OUR Lord was addressing Himself to the unbelieving Jews. He told them that they had received abundant evidence of His being the sent one of God, but yet they had rejected Him, and He solemnly charged this home upon their consciences. If you read the passage at home you will see that in the 36th verse He reminded them that He had received the witness of John, and all men believed John to be a prophet. He had come as the herald of Christ, the promised Elijah, and he had borne witness, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Yet this clear testimony they had despised and trod under foot.

Next, our Lord claimed that His miracles and lifework were a sufficient witness to His Messiahship. “The works which the Father has given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” There is, perhaps, no better evidence of the truth of our Savior’s mission than His character, life and miracles. The truths which He revealed, the perfections which He displayed and the wonders which He worked all went to show that He was, indeed, anointed of God and sent to be the Savior of men.

Further, our Lord informs them that there was more testimony, still, though in that evidence many of them had not shared. He says, “The Father Himself, which has sent Me, has borne witness of Me.” Three times out of the excellent glory the Father had said, “This is My beloved Son, hear you Him.” This was good evidence, whether they had heard it or not, and though He tells them that they had neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape, yet others had heard that voice and seen the descent of the Spirit like a dove—and their testimony ought to have had weight with them. To you, dear friends, assembled here tonight, this is a very important piece of evidence. We rejoice as we hear that God has actually spoken by *audible* sounds out of heaven and borne testimony to His Son that He is the Christ!

Then our Lord goes on to say that there was yet more evidence in which the Jews had not shared—the unbelieving ones—and that is, the *internal* evidence which, to those who have it, is the very best in all the world! Internal evidence—the evidence of a renewed heart, the evidence of joy and peace, the evidence of conscious pardon, the evidence of sanctification—this is the most convincing of all evidence to those who possess it! It is clear as the sun in the heavens, but they had not shared in it and, therefore, felt it not. “You have not His word abiding in you; for whom He has sent, Him you believe not.”

And then the Master reminds them that there was yet a fifth mode of evidence which demonstrated Him to be the Christ, and that was the Scriptures, of which He says, (if I may read the text in the indicative and I think it must be so read)—“You search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.” Therefore, if we will now forget the unbelieving Jews and only think of unbelieving *Gentiles*, there are to us, tonight, evidences concerning the Lord Jesus of the most convincing character. There are John’s witness, the witness of the miracles, the witness of the voice of the Father out of heaven, the inner witness which many of our friends and kindred tell us of, and then the witness of the Holy Spirit in sacred Scripture. All these show that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Redeemer of man that He is the appointed Mediator of the covenant of grace and that through Him there is immediate salvation for all who will believe on Him.

The worst point about the whole conduct of the Jews was that, with all this witness in His favor, which they could not overturn, they would not come to Him that they might have eternal life! At this

moment there are many such unbelievers upon the face of the earth and, what is more to the point, I fear that at this hour, in this congregation, there are some who will not come to Jesus that they may have life. There are persons in this great assembly, consisting, as it does, of individuals who have enough thought about religion to come out on a weeknight to hear a sermon about it, who, nevertheless, will not come to Christ! Some of these persons are often here, familiar with these courts and familiar with this voice—perhaps so familiar that they have grown accustomed to it and it has but little power with them. And yet, though they will come to *us*, they will not come to Christ! However, it is to them that I shall speak to-night and I ask God's people to pray that while I am speaking, the Spirit of God may apply the word to the heart and to the conscience. I speak in great weakness and bodily pain and, therefore, I hope to be aided and assisted by a double portion of the divine strength, and, if it is so, God's glory will come of it.

Now, we shall notice, first of all, *the great plan of salvation*. Let us look at it—it is coming to Christ that we might have life. Secondly, I shall look and ask you to look at *your position towards it*—"You will not come to Me that you might have life." Then, thirdly, I shall dwell, for a few minutes, upon what will certainly be *the result of such conduct as this*. And, fourthly, before we have done, let us hope for *a change in your state of mind*, so that before you sleep tonight it shall cease to be true of you that you will not come—and a joyful fact that you *have* come and found eternal life! Your immediate conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ shall be the great object of our discourse and of the prayers which will go with it from the Lord's people here assembled.

I. First, then, the text very briefly sets forth THE PLAN OF SALVATION. Christ speaks of it thus, "Come to Me that you might have life." The way to be saved is to come to Christ! Christ is a person, a living person, full of power to save! He has not placed His salvation in sacraments, or books, or priests, but He has kept it in Himself, and if you want to have it, you must come to Him! He is still the one source and fountain of eternal mercy. There is no getting it by going round about Him, or only going near Him—you must come *to Him*, actually to *Him*, and there must be a personal contact established between the Lord Jesus and your spirit. Of course it cannot be a *natural* contact, for His body is in the heavens and we are here. It must be a *spiritual* contact, by which your mind, heart, thoughts shall come to Christ, and faith, like a hand, shall touch Him spiritually, grasp Him by believing upon Him and receive life and grace from His divine power. Just as when the woman of old touched His garment's hem, the virtue went out of Him to her and she was healed, so now, though He is yonder, faith's long hand can touch His divine and human person, by confiding, trusting and resting in Him. And so, virtue will flow from Him into our soul and our mind shall be healed of whatever disease it has.

Think, then, at this very moment, of Jesus Christ, who was once nailed to the cross and died as the sacrifice for sin. Think of Him as sitting, now, at the right hand of God, even the Father, clothed with infinite majesty and might. And if you are enabled, now, to repose your heart upon Him, to believe that He is able to save you and, by an act of faith, to commit your soul into His keeping that He may save it, you have done what He bids you do—you have come to Him and He will not cast you out—the blessings of His salvation shall be yours! This is the coming which He sets before you—the drawing near of the mind, the heart, the soul to Jesus, so as to trust in Him—to trust in Him at once for all that your soul needs.

The text, when it says, "Come to Me that you might have life," implies that we are to come to Jesus Christ for everything, for *life* includes all that is absolutely necessary for salvation, yes, salvation itself! It is the lowest stage of grace, and yet the term comprehends the very highest condition of the soul, even when it enters into glory and enjoys life at the right hand of God. O sinner, by nature you are dead in sin! You must be made alive or you cannot dwell with God, for He is not the God of the dead but of the living! To be quickened, you must come into contact with Him who is "the life," even Jesus. And if you come to Him, you have begun to live! You are also condemned to die on account of your breaches of the law. You are condemned already, for you have sinned against the most high God. If you come to Christ, the Mediator, the sentence against you shall be removed. You shall live, for, "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." As soon as the soul comes to Christ, it receives pardon and justification. These two remove from us the guilt which brought us under condemnation and put up-

on us a righteousness which entitles us to stand before the most high God without fear, for, “who is He that condemns? It is Christ that died.”

Coming to Christ gives us actual spiritual life and gives us, also, *judicial* life, so that we need not fear the axe of Justice. Those cannot be condemned who are accepted in the Beloved and all are thus accepted who have come to Christ! I will read you two verses, as they certainly may be translated without the slightest violation of the original language. The text runs thus—“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me; but you will not *come to Me* that you might have life”—as if to show you that there are many persons who seek life and even think that they have it, and yet have not found it because they stop short of Christ. They search the Scriptures, but they will not come to Jesus. Is it not, therefore, a good thing to search the Scriptures? Yes, that it is, and the more you search them the better. But it is not *the* thing—it is not the saving work. You may be Bible readers and yet perish! But this can never happen if you come to Jesus by faith. I may put the same truth of God in another shape. You pray. Some of you pray earnestly, but yet you will not come to Christ that you might have life! Is it not a good thing to pray? Yes, indeed, a blessed thing to pray, but still it is not *the* thing—it is not the subject of the great saving *command*. The gospel precept is not, “Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that searches the Scriptures and prays shall be saved.” No, but the gospel runs thus—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” There stands the healing touch—the act which brings us life—faith in the heart and confession with the mouth! To these the promise is made, and of those who neglect these our Lord says, “You will not come to Me, that you might have life.”

Now, observe that this way of coming to Christ, which is indicated in the text, *is the only way*. There are other preachings, but there is only one true ministry, and the true ministry bears witness concerning Christ. There are other supposed ways of salvation, but they shall be accursed that preach them! And woe unto them in the last great day who have deluded men’s souls with their “other gospels,” for, “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid—Jesus Christ the righteous.” “Believe and live” is the one unchanging oracle and He that has regard to it, shall find eternal life! But take heed that you despise not him that speaks this wondrous word from heaven, “for there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby you must be saved.” Come to Christ! Come to the anointed Savior! Come to the Son of God! Come to Him who is both God and man! Come to the Mediator! Come to the Redeemer! Come to the Great Substitute for sinners! Come and trust Him and you shall live! I have no other message for you. Do not reject it, for if you do you must perish without hope.

And this way, as it is the only one, blessed be God, is *a sure way and an open way*. Sure, for none ever tried it and failed. There lives not on earth, there lives not in hell—one soul that trusted in Christ and yet was not saved—

***“There is life in a look at the Crucified One.
There is life at this moment for you.”***

life in every instance. There has never yet been one that did confide, alone, in Jesus, that found faith to be useless, for faith is a living thing and works by love. It purifies the soul and saves the man through Jesus Christ.

And it is an open way as well as a sure one—open to you tonight, dear friend. “Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? Or who shall descend into the deep to bring Him up again from the dead? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart.” If you will, with your heart believe in the Lord Jesus, and with your mouth make confession of Him, you shall be saved, even you! The latter days have fallen upon us! The shades of the evening of the world and the damps of its autumn are all around us! But still there sounds forth the cry, “Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.” Still is the fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness—

***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”***

Thus have I put, as plainly as I can, the plan of salvation. That is it and that is all of it—it is to come to Christ! If I talked much longer I might darken, but I could scarcely make clearer, the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus. It is to come to Christ, to trust Him, to obey Him, to yield yourself to Him, to love Him! So, to come to Him is to come to Him on earth and be with Him forever and ever in heaven!

II. Now, secondly, and very solemnly, I want to speak to you unconverted ones, who have heard the gospel a long time, about **YOUR POSITION IN REFERENCE TO THIS PLAN OF SALVATION.** “You will not come to Me that you might have life.”

That describes your position and I earnestly beseech you to look it in the face. I would have you get by yourself and say to yourself aloud and deliberately, “*I will not* come to Him, that I might have life.” But you reply, “That would be an awful thing to say!” I know it would be, but it is a more awful thing, to my mind, not to dare to say it and yet practically to be doing it! Are you ashamed to *say* it and yet *not* ashamed to do it? I know there is a curious feeling about some men that if the preacher openly rebukes a vice which they practice they find fault with him for even speaking of it. They say that he ought not to allude to such vile things, yet they live in these very sins from day to day! This is the hypocrisy and cant of sinners and it is detestable! And so men will live in unbelief, but if you ask them to say decidedly, “I do not believe,” or to assert openly, “I will not come to Christ that I may have life,” they think we must be as wicked as they are to ask them to say such a thing! Now, what you dare do, you will surely dare say, or else you are a coward and a liar to your soul! If it is a right thing to *do*, it must be right thing to *say*. I do not ask you to go and proclaim it to others—to infect them with your disease—but I ask you to say it *to yourself*. I ask you to label yourself what you are and let it be distinctly understood by your own soul what you mean and where your position is. I pray you act honestly and openly with your own heart. It surely cannot be wise to cheat yourself.

You will not come to Jesus that you might have life—we know this to be true of many of you because you have not come. If you say it is not true that you will not come, and then I reply, “How is it that you have not come?” If you have come, how readily do I withdraw the charge! With what joy and happiness do I bless the Lord that you have been led to His dear Son! But, if you have not come, dear friend—and you know, yourself, whether you have or not—then I cannot retract a syllable of the accusation, but I repeat the charge—you will not come to Him that you might have life. I know that you would rather put it another way and you would say softly, “I cannot come.” But this is clattering language! Do you know what, “cannot,” in such a case means in Scripture? It means the same thing as, “will not.” If you have the will, you have the power, for, wherever there is the will, God has it, and He does not give the will without giving the power! Though sometimes we have to cry out that, “to will is present with us,” but, “how to perform that which we would, we find not,” yet that lasts not long. When the Lord gives the will, He soon gives the way. His grace does not divide the two gifts—the power comes with the will. And if you have the will tonight you have the power. That you cannot is true, but it is only true because you *will not*—your will is the seat of the weakness. I may say of a man that he cannot be chaste. Why? Because he will not be chaste! That is the *only* reason! I may say of another man that he cannot speak the truth. What do I mean by that? I mean that he is such a liar that he *will not* speak the truth. He could if he would, but there is the point—he will not. Our weakness to do good lies in the fact that our will, itself, is opposed to the right. “You *will not* come that you might have life” is the true English of that excuse of yours that you cannot! If you would, you could. It is because you *will not* that you cannot!

But one of you will say, “It is not that I will not, but that I *dare not* come to Jesus.” Ah, my dear friend, but if you say, “I dare not,” I have to ask you on what grounds you support that remarkable fear. Dare not be saved? Dare not come to the Son of God whose very person is love? Dare not do what God commands you? “This is His commandment that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” Turn that, “dare not,” round the other way—it were much better used so—“I dare not *refuse* to come! I dare not tarry any longer! I dare not disbelieve! I dare not distrust! I dare not keep my sin and let my Savior go.” That is the true kind of, “dare not,” but the other is an idle excuse. How idle it must be for a man to say, “I dare not obey my God and trust in His Son,” I leave your own consciences to judge. The truth is, “You will not come to Christ, that you might have life.”

Let me hold you, now, and ask you to think for a few minutes of what you are doing. Think of *the life* which you are spurning! There is no life for you anywhere but in Christ—and if you will not come to Him you will never have life! That is to say, you will not have that without which this poor existence of yours is only a lingering death. The grace which enables you to overcome sin, the joy which enables us to master trouble, the light which helps us to look into divine mysteries, the inward spiritual principle given in regeneration, by which we have fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ—these are main ingredients in the life which you need. O my dear friend, life—the life of God in the soul—is to me the one thing necessary, the one thing without which all the world were not worth having! It would be better to be poor and hungry and naked than to be without this inner life. It is true life in this world to live by faith upon the Son of God—and that you are missing and despising! This is the life which made your mother what she was. You remember her holy living and you cannot forget her triumphant dying! The life which makes men holy, happy, safe and blessed is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” and this it is that you need. Will you reject it? O be not so foolish!

Remember that this life which you spurn is eternal life! It is the life with which you are to live in another world, the life which shall qualify you to dwell with cherubim and seraphim and join their songs; the life which will enable you to stand before the throne of God and cast your crown at His feet in ecstasy of grateful joy! It is this that you do not care to have, for you will not come to Christ that you might have life. Do not continue to spurn the best of God’s gift!

Let me tell you, the day will come when you will wring your hands in anguish to think that you despised that life. It may be that it will be so in the throes of death, but it is certain that it will be so amid the terrors of judgment, when there shall open wide before you the gates of hell, and before you shall blaze the lake that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death. They who are not born twice will have to die twice! And he that has not life through faith in Jesus must die the second death and endure its pangs forever and forever. See, then, the life you spurn, dear friend, and ask yourself whether this is wise.

Next, think—and I wish I could speak to you as I would—think of the person whom you reject. “You will not come to ME,” says Christ. I have been thinking of this all day—how it is that any man can be so base as not to come to my Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Him! Let me portray Him to you as He completed your redemption. He hangs upon His cross—His face is all stained with the bruises and the spit of the rough soldiers. And down it trickles the red drops that have been started from His temples by the crown of thorns. His eyes are red with weeping and with watching, and His visage is more marred than that of any man. You can see all His bones. His body is emaciated and worn with anguish. His hands—the cruel nails have dragged and torn till you see the wide gaping wounds from which the blood flows. His feet are the same—they are both fountains of blood. And then His side! Behold His side—from which gushed blood and water from the deep wound made by the spear. It is He who thus redeemed mankind! The Lord of glory hangs there! The only-begotten Son of the Highest, the Prince of the kings of the earth has given Himself up to bleed and to die a felon’s death for you! And what is your attitude towards Him? You turn your backs upon Him! Is it nothing to you? “Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?” Do you mean that it is nothing to you that Jesus should bleed to redeem men? Do you mean to refuse a share in that redemption? Do you utterly reject the bloody ransom price He paid upon the cross? If it is so, then put it down in plain English—put it down in black and white and sign your name to it—“I refuse Christ’s blood.” To write it down is the very best thing you can do if it is, indeed, so! Because, perhaps, when you have read the dreadful lines, your conscience may be lashed into something like life and you may begin to look at Him whom you have pierced, and mourn because of Him. Think about this, you that will not come to Him that you might have life.

But, lo, I see Him yet again! He is in heaven now. Quite another picture may we set before you. There He is at the right hand of God, even the Father, clothed with a snow-white garment down to His feet, and girt about with a golden sash, distributing crowns and thrones! He is worshipped by ten thousand times ten thousand blood-washed spirits and angels in all their ranks! Now you can be sure of this, that He it is to whom you will not come! From His glory as well as from His shame you turn away! It is well for Me that I do not feel, just now, about it as I did before I entered this pulpit, for if I did I could

only stand here and burst into tears, and could not dare to say what I am uttering now. This is so unkind to Jesus! So ungenerous to Jesus! I cannot bear it! It is at the price of your *souls* that you reject Him! Will you sooner be damned than have Him? Do you mean that? What strange hate is this, that to show your hatred of Jesus you will destroy yourselves? O foolish sinners! Foolish sinners! What mad freak of sin is this, that you will bear your sins and dare the death they bring sooner than have Christ to be your Savior? Yet it is so, so long as it is true that you will not come to Him that you might have life.

Now, think, again, what it is you are doing. What is *this which you refuse to do*? What is the action you refuse? You refuse *to come to Him*. If it were to come to Sinai, where the trumpet waxes exceedingly loud and long, and where the flaming lightning flashes forth amidst tremendous thunder, I could understand your reluctance. But the deed you refuse to do is to come to Calvary, to come to Jesus where nothing sounds but love and mercy! You will not *come to Him*. That means, with some of you, that you will not even *think* about Christ. He may die, but you cannot trouble to think His redemption is over. He may rise and thus may justify His people, but you have something else to think about. And that something else, with some of you, is earning your daily bread. With others of you it is only how you may pass the hours and go from one amusement to another. Salvation is worth Christ dying for, but not worth your thinking about! Alas, how the mass of people in London think of *anything* except Christ and their souls! The papers ring with some fresh thing and the news is on everybody's tongue. But my Lord's death for sinners—oh, it is a bore, is it not? It is a weariness to hear about it and, “sermons are very dull,” they say. It is because men's hearts are dead that sermons are dull! Jesus is not endured because men will not come to Him and live! O blessed Spirit, turn their hard hearts and stubborn wills, and turn them now! While some will condescend to think a little, yet they utterly refuse to come to the point and believe. Now, surely, the very least thing that the Lord Jesus Christ can claim of us is that we believe Him! When has He ever been false? What is there about His character that is untrue? It is due to truth to render to it our confidence and our trust—and when we know that this faith, this believing Him, this trusting Him, which is His due, is, nevertheless, simple as it is, the highest and most saving act of the mind—it is strange that we should still refuse to believe! What Jesus claims is that we so believe Him as to obey Him. Now, if He were a tyrant, we might very well be reluctant to obey. But He is so gracious, His yoke is so easy and His burden is so light that it is foolish as well as wicked to not obey! All His followers tell us that there never was such a Master and that they wish they could altogether obey His every will and wish, for obedience to Him is bliss to them—and yet you refuse to yield obedience to such a Master? Is this wise or right? He asks your love—the love of your heart. What a heart that must be which cannot and will not love Him! How foul, how vile, how dead, how black, how stony is the heart that cannot love Him who gave His heart's blood to redeem us! O soul, soul, soul, if you perish, it is not because the gospel was hard and exacting and its terms severe, or because the saving act was impossible to you and out of your reach—you perish because you will not come to Him that you might have life!

I desire you, still, to keep your eyes fixed on that fact, my friend, that you are acting as if you had said, “I will not come to Christ that I might have life.” *Think of why you will not come*. Can you give me some good reason why you will not come? Perhaps you answer that you hope to find salvation somewhere else. These Jews fancied so. They thought that they would find it in the Scriptures. “In them you think you have eternal life.” Hence a personal Christ was rejected, that they might go on searching into the original text, counting the letters and disputing over knotty points. They were, however, mistaken—the Bible cannot save! Perhaps you feel that you can get more good by trying to understand doctrine than by coming to Christ. You will be bitterly mistaken! However excellent the Scriptures are, if you put Scripture in the place of Christ, you have made a choice and you have set your choice in opposition to God's choice, which is this—“that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” It is not on “*it*”—that you are to believe, but on “*Him* whom He has sent.” That is the great saving point, the person, the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ! O beloved, I wish you could see this—that Jesus Christ gathers up in His person all the teaching of Scripture—that in His blessed person is all the efficacy of His redemptive work for men and that what is to be done is *to come to Him*. When you do not believe in Jesus, you refuse to honor the Son of God. And He has said, “He that refuses Me, refuses Him that sent Me.” You refuse God when you refuse His Christ!

Possibly, dear friend, the reason why you will not come is that you indulge some secret sin which you cannot give up. O that secret sin! That secret sin! That worm at the root of the soul! I know not what it is, my friend, but God knows and you know. Is it your pride? Can you not stoop to be saved by mercy, through the grace of God? Or is it a fleshly lust from which you cannot separate yourself? Is it dear to you as your right hand? Off with it, man! “It is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.” Is sin holding you back from Christ, from life, from heaven? Dear as this Barabbas may be, do not prefer him to your Lord! Away with the sin, it is a viper! Away with it, or else God will say, “Away with *you*.”

I fear, in some cases, that the chain which holds men back from Christ is sheer frivolity. It is so with a great many young people—and there are some old people who are quite as trifling—they have gray hair on the outside of their heads, but none within. Their minds are none the riper for being old. They are silly, frivolous, and superficial, trifling with everything, never serious upon any theme—and above all others they need to be sharply rebuked. Ah, sirs, if you must play, I wish you would play with something cheaper than the blood of Christ! If you must trifle, trifle with something that will cost you less than your souls! It seems a dreadful thing for a man to stake his whole estate on the running of a horse, as some have done. But it is less foolish than to stake your endless destiny upon the possibility of your living another week, or another day! Yet you are doing this—you know you are! May God awaken you, dear friend! May He speedily awaken you from such folly as this.

Now, I want you, dear hearer, to come back to the point and look at the fact that you will not come to Christ. You will do anything else, but you will not come to Christ. You will come out to our special meetings, but why do you come? What do you come to these meetings for if you do not need Christ? And you will pray from mere habit—you would not like to go to sleep without praying after a fashion—but what do you pray for if you will not have the best gift which God can give you, even Jesus Christ? What is there worth praying for if you refuse Christ? Yes, you will search the Scriptures, but, in the name of reason, for what? Why do men go into the harvest fields if they need no grain? Why do they dig in the mines if they do not need to find metals? The Scriptures (with all reverence of them do we speak) are but the mine—Christ is the treasure! They are the fields, but He is the harvest! Take Christ out of the Bible and what is it? He is the sum and the substance of it all! And when you search the Scriptures you should search them that you may find *Him*, or else you misuse and abuse them; but why this strange reluctance? “Oh, I need to feel,” says one. Yes, I know. You would like to feel deep convictions. You would like *anything* rather than to come to Christ. “But,” says one, “I must have time to think.” I know—you want to be saved by your *thinking*—anything is more desirable to you than coming to Christ. Come to Christ just as you are, just as you are *now*, while now His Spirit pleads with you! Ah, you will not do this, some of you will not, and therefore I must leave you. Let us pass on to the third point very briefly.

III. Let us consider thoughtfully WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF THIS. I will put myself in your place, now, and speak for you.

“I will not come to Christ that I might have life.” When I have said that, what does it involve? It means that any good feelings which I may have had through hearing the preaching of the gospel, or through listening to the addresses of earnest Christian men, are as the morning cloud and as the early dew. They are all to end in nothing and to pass away. They cannot do me any good. I have heard sermons in vain. I have read the Scriptures in vain. I have attended prayer meetings in vain. If I will not come to Christ all these things are in vain! But what next? Why, then, I may expect that the feelings I now have (for I am conscious of some measure of holy desire) will pass away. I shall grow harder and harder, and harder in heart, and more indifferent, and more callous as time rolls on. And what will happen to me, then? Why, this—I never shall come to Christ at all!

I suppose that some of you, though you will not come now, think you will come to Jesus one day. Oh, if it were told you, to a dead certainty, that you never would come, you would stand aghast. “Ah, me!” you would say, “Must I, then, be lost forever? Shall I never come to Christ?” My dear friend, it looks very likely that you never will be saved. If you are to come to Jesus, why not now; *why not now*? Every day adds to the chances, if I may use such an expression, adds to the deadly “odds” against you,

that you will never come to Christ! Ah, it is a prediction which might be terribly accurate if we were to say that some of you who have oftentimes been awakened and yet have gone to sleep again, will sleep forever and will never lift up your eyes till you awake in the flames of hell! Ah, God, in Your mercy, prevent this! But this is the last result of all. If I will not come to Christ that I might have life, then I must die eternally and be driven forever from the presence of God and from the glory of His power! And, O my soul, what will that be? What will that be? Ask those who know what it is. Ask Dives while he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue! Ask those whose perpetual reply is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! But I will not pause to give you their answers—it would be too dreadful! Look at your future! If you will not come to Jesus that you might have life, you shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in you!

IV. And now, last of all, LET US HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE CHANGE, and a change tonight! I felt, while I was speaking, that some of you were saying, “No, I dare not say that I will not come.” Well, then, there is only one other word to say—“*I will come.*” O that you would say, “I will come,” and then carry out the resolve at once! “He is worthy of my trust. I will trust Him. He is worthy of my obedience. If He will help me, I will obey Him. He is worthy of my love. By His rich grace I will love Him—I will, I will.” Thank God, dear friend, if you have said that, though it has been with trembling lips, for you may come. He bids you. His own words are, “Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” You may come. His church invites you and His Spirit invites you, for, “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” We who have, ourselves, come, would all invite you, for it is written, “Let him that hears, say, Come. And whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” Do you feel a softness of soul coming over you? Does something whisper, “Now is mercy’s hour”? Then, I beseech you, quench not the Spirit, and tarry no longer! No, tarry not even to leave that pew and find your little chamber and fall on your knees, but *here and now* yield yourself to Him! It will be the best moment you have ever lived—the beginning of days to you! As the night when Israel came out of Egypt shall this night be to your spirit if you yield yourself—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
He is my strength and righteousness—
My Jesus, and my all.”*

What He bids you do is two-fold, believe and *be baptized*. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” First, with the *heart*, man believes, and next with his mouth he makes confession of Jesus. Baptism is the way to make confession according to Christ’s own rule, to which I charge you to be obedient—and may He accept you, and bless you this night, for His name’s sake. We shall sing this one verse, and I ask nobody to sing it who does not mean it—

*“’Tis done—the great transaction’s done:
I am my Lord’s and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”*

Now, for once do not stand up, but sit still and sing it just as you are—those who can sing it. As for the rest of you, the Lord have mercy upon you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 5:24-27.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—486, 515.

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